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The illness of the chief is liable to bring misfortune, or rather to be associated with a general condition of ill luck, and is even now a source of fear, as I observed myself on several occasions. At his death the prosperity of the land is brought to an end just as the political organization is temporarily at a standstill. No crops are planted by the chief's family and no first-fruit rites are done. *Icalo catwa.* (The land has fallen down, i.e. the state has collapsed.) The sex life of the chief has also a mysterious effect on the welfare of all his people. His sexual power gives vigour and 'warmth' to the land. Hence the phrase *ukukafye calo* (to warm the land), and the rule that a territorial chief should never sleep with a woman when travelling outside his territory.[1] By a sexual act the *mfumu* can bless seeds or other objects required for the use of the tribe. But this power is alike the cause of danger. By breaking a sex taboo—such as approaching the spirits without the right ceremony of purification, the ruler can bring incalculable harm on the community. Of such a man I heard the comment, 'Why does he like women? Does not that imperil the land? That is not a chief. No!'[2]

Besides this powerful and mysterious influence over the land and its people, the chief is also able to influence their destinies by his power of access to the tribal spirits. This right is based on his possession of the *benye* or sacred relics by which the most powerful ancestral spirits of the Bemba can be invoked, and also by his supreme control over the spirit-centres of his whole *icalo*. The economic rites he performs at these different shrines will be described in detail later. Suffice it now to say that this supreme control over the supernatural resources of the *icalo* gives the territorial chief what Edwin Smith has called the 'spiritual ownership'[3]

mwana Cingi. Nomba teti tukane yo. E batupela fyuma fingi, ne ndalama, ne nsalu shingi. Mwe Kampampa Mutanshi imyala yobe! Ni mwe mukalamba, mwapela Pokili ukuti ekale pa musumba. Nomba lubuke lubemba. Ifwe twalaya mu fyalo. Shyalempo!

[1] The Paramount in any case should not leave his district.

[2] *Cinshi baletemwa ku banakashi. Te kucile calo? Te mfumu iyi! Ye!*

[3] Cf. E. W. Smith and A. Dale, op. cit., vol. i, p. 388. It is important to realize that in many parts of Africa the spiritual owner of the land is not identical with the political owner. A warrior people extends its boundaries and occupies land under the guardianship of the tutelary spirits of other tribes. In this area it is common to find that in territory seized by the Bemba from the neighbouring Bisa or Lala during the last century, the conquering people are offering prayers to the dead chiefs of the conquered, and are dependent for this purpose on the services of a Bisa or Lala priest. The chief Nkula sends cloth to Mungulube, the

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Men who Kill elephants must be purified

[783] 224 by special medicines (*umufinsa*, *umusaka*, *katumbi*, *kalonansofu*, *umwenge*, &c.), and medicines are also placed on the head of the dead animal to prevent its *icibanda* returning to make the hunter mad. [783] 787 Further dangers await the man who sees the nerve of an elephant tusk before killing three elephants, and by this means becomes impotent. Such multifarious beliefs and rites could only be analysed properly in a treatise on Bantu magic, but they reflect the intense excitement of the people in the elephant hunt and all that pertains to it.

To conclude, hunting is the romance and delight of Bemba life, not a simple food-producing activity or even a very efficient one. The native hunts for food, but he hunts whether he gets game or not. Like other products of the bush, the supply of meat depends, in Bemba eyes, on the blessing of the spirits secured through the chief and hence it is subject to tribute, but the amount obtained is not sufficiently large for the development of complicated rights of economic ownership. Specialist hunters of the larger game existed, but few are still to be found. More magic surrounds the different forms of hunting than any other economic pursuit.

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of the prayer also emphasizes the right of the priest to officiate. He bases his claim to speak on lineage alone, and hence he usually calls the *imipashi* he is invoking by their kinship terms. For instance, some begin: 'You my mother's brothers and my grandfathers!' (*Mwe Bayama na Bashikulu!*); and I have twice heard a chief add a separate prayer to 'Our mothers' (*Banyinefwe*), that is to say, the ancestresses of the royal line. By such means the claims of the living on the dead are publicly stated, and also the rights of the headman or chief to the office he holds.

(*b*) *The blessing of the objects used.* Besides the initial prayers at the different ceremonies the chief object to be used in the subsequent economic activity, such as the axe for the tree-cutting or the seeds for the sowing, must be blessed. This is achieved by bringing it in contact with the magic power of sex. The axe or the seeds are given potency by being placed at the head of the bed (*ku mutwe*) on which the officiating priest and his head wife have intercourse on the night before the rite takes place. The magic effects of such an act are difficult to explain without a full analysis of the Bemba ideas on sex, procreation, and their contagious effects on fire, sacred objects, and on certain human beings. Suffice it to say that the sexual act is thought to make the body hot (*umubili uakava*) and 'bad' (*ukuba ne fibi*),[1] and that the individual is then thought unfit to approach the ancestral spirits or to have contact with any sacred object such as the chiefs' relics, unless he has been ritually purified. But, nevertheless, an act of intercourse between a man and his head wife, followed by this special purification, is the means by which magic potency is conferred on the object placed at the head of the bed, and in some inexplicable way the blessing of the *imipashi* themselves is thereby invoked. Natives, who were usually shy in discussing the magic aspects of sex, would give in explanation some such phrase as '*Ni kufunge mipashi*' ('It is to soften or propitiate the spirits'), and one added that the reason why the chief had such power of blessing the axe or seeds was 'because of his chieftainship' (*ubufumu*, the abstract principle of chieftainship). And of the object blessed, another informant stated that new qualities had been conferred on it 'on account of the chieftainship, because the chief lies on top of it' (*umulandu ua*

[831]

[1] A condition expressed by a number of technical terms such as *ukutetema* (to be ritually impure) or by euphemisms such as *ukuba na kantu* (to have some little thing wrong with you).

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789 [754] witchcraft, handled by people believed to have supernatural powers.

(ii) *The magic influence of sex, blood and fire* which, when brought 789 into wrongful contact with each other, are thought to be highly 831 dangerous to every Bemba, but particularly to babies and young 372 children, who are believed to be vulnerable to so many dangers; and to chiefs, on whom the prosperity of the land is held to depend. This system of beliefs is extremely complex, and yet it is necessary to try to understand it, if the meaning of the chisungu is to be grasped. The dogma relating sex and fire is the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behaviour of the Bemba.

834 Briefly speaking, sex relations according to Bemba dogma make 784 a couple 'hot'. In this state it is dangerous for them to approach 783 the ancestral spirits in any rite of prayer or sacrifice; and any chief 622 or headman who attempted to perform such a ceremony without purification would run the risk of bringing disaster on his district. [793] The chief's shrines are guarded by old women or hereditary priests who keep sex taboos. For the chief to be casual in keeping sex taboos, or to approach his ancestors without purification is 'to spoil the land' (*ukuonaula icalo*).

831 All persons of sex maturity are in fact distinguished by a special 372 term (*wa kuboko*) and are excluded from a number of rites on the 784 ground that they are 'hot', or are likely to be 'hot'. Such people 783 can pollute the fireplace of a hut by touching it, and then a baby 854 fed with gruel cooked on this fire might sicken and die. Parents 846 who do not purify themselves after intercourse run the risk of killing their children by accidentally touching the family hearth. Adulterers are more dangerous still, as they cannot purify themselves since the necessary rite can only be carried out by husband and wife. Small babies and their mothers are therefore kept away from beer drinks where 'bad' people congregate drinking round the fire without care. The baby's gruel is often cooked on a separate hearth and in a separate pot. The art of Bemba motherhood in fact consists very largely in guarding children from danger from fire. A newly born baby is 'unripe' (*mubishi*) and is in a specially precarious position until it has been 'taken' by its parents (*ukupoka umwana*) by an act of intercourse and the lighting of new fire, when it is a few months old. To save the baby, it must be 'brought to the fire' by being held over the flames of a doctored

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fire when it is first placed to the breast, or when the cord falls off (*ukumwalawila*). If its father is away and the ceremony of 'taking the child' cannot take place, the baby is given medicine (*umuti wa lueshya*). The mother and the midwife extinguish the old fire, mud the hut and light a new fire. Then they carry the baby to the men's shelter where there are presumably many youths 'with heat' or 'with bad things', or to a kitchen where the people have been known not to have done the purification ceremony. In this dangerous company, they give the baby gruel cooked on the new fire to make it immune. The rite of *ukumukokotola* is a ceremonial spitting of raw food on the baby by a menstruating woman so that the baby can be safely touched by a woman who is in this condition. All these methods are believed to secure immunity on homoeopathic principles.

The chief's sacred fire, the fire of the land, must be protected with even greater care. It is placed in a separate hut and watched by a senior wife, past child bearing. The chief's food is usually cooked by a man and not a woman.

To remove the dangers due to sex intercourse a special ceremony is required and this is one which can only be performed by a legally married couple. Hence the close links between the rules of ritual and those governing marriage ties, and the great importance of magic belief in determining the strength of the marital relationship. At marriage each girl is presented by her paternal aunt with a miniature pot about 2½ inches in diameter which must be guarded with the utmost secrecy. With this the purification rite is carried out. It is filled with water and placed on the fire, man and wife each holding the rim. Water from the pot is then poured by the wife on to her husband's hands, and some say on to the wife's as well. New 'pure' fire is then relit either by means of fire-sticks, or, as is usual nowadays, with matches. This apparently simple rite is the essential act which removes the condition of hotness from the body of man and wife and renders them free to touch a hearth with impunity or to approach the ancestral spirits. Some say that it used to be performed after each sex act and others that it was merely done before some ceremony of special undertaking such as harvesting. It is still spoken of with the utmost secrecy and shyness and still survives even in the face of strong opposition from

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with her, is also a danger to all the men concerned. These triple relationships are constantly mentioned in court cases and are made the subject of claims by the injured family of a dead man or woman who declare that 'their child' has been killed in that way. They recur in narratives of the rather lurid sex lives of Bemba princesses who are expected to take many lovers, but must not bring trouble on the land by simultaneous relations of this kind.

Lastly, in common with many Bantu peoples, Bemba believe that, if a man commits adultery while his wife is pregnant, the baby is born dead. He has taken the spirit of the child (*asendo umupashi wa umwana*). If the woman is unfaithful while she is pregnant, then she herself dies in childbirth unless she confesses and gets medicine in time.[1]

I have dilated on this system of attitudes and beliefs because I think it fundamental to the understanding of Bemba puberty ritual and also because it cannot fail, I think, to strike the field-worker in this area as one of the basic elements of tribal dogma. It would be impossible to live long in a Bemba village without running constantly across instances of the effects of these beliefs whether in terms of ritual or in the most practical problems of cooking, catering and entertaining. If the Bemba can be said to have an ideological obsession in the sense that they are constantly pre-occupied with one set of fears, it is this belief in the magical potency of sex, fire and blood. Such emotional attitudes set us puzzling problems. In this chapter I shall confine myself to stating them. Later in the book I hope at least to suggest some hypotheses which may stimulate comparative research in other tribes holding similar beliefs.

To recapitulate, Bemba dogma stresses the role of the ancestors in determining human fortunes as well as the power of injured spirits, who revenge the injustices they suffered on earth on the

[1] It will be seen from the above that the causes of barrenness or death in childbirth are numerous among the Bemba. Barrenness may be due to the special curse of the father's sister; to an injured spirit returning to punish a descendant at random; to allowing the umbilical cord of a baby to fall to the ground; to adultery; or to witchcraft. Miscarriage is thought to be due to an injured spirit shaking the womb of the pregnant woman so that the baby falls out; when it occurs all the women of the matrilineage must be treated with medicine. Death in childbirth is due to the adultery of the mother herself.

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769 living. It also emphasizes the magical powers associated with sex
●831 which is linked with feelings of guilt and anxiety expressed in the taboos clustered round marriage, childbirth and the rearing of children. This feeling of guilt is so widely diffused that innocent
[783] people are thought to suffer from the magical results of a sex misdemeanour committed by someone else.

581 These beliefs support the institution of marriage since safety
789 from magical danger is acquired by means of a ceremony which can
837 only be carried out by a man's head wife. No Bemba supposes that a husband will be kept from adultery by this means, but the legal wife is the only person who can secure him and those near him from the resultant punishment.

622 The reader is asked to bear in mind, without attempting further
372 analysis, the association that exists in Bemba ideology between
831 chieftainship, fire, sex and power to influence the fertility of the
789 land and its people, and to remember that these powers are hurt
753 by blood, intercourse out of marriage, death, murder, lion-killing and all cold, terrible or 'bad things' (*fibi*). Fertility which is so much desired is produced by conduct pleasing to the ancestors, and to senior and especially paternal relatives, the blessings of persons in authority and the carrying out of the ritual of marriage. Illness is inflicted usually on the innocent party, by sex relations out of marriage without ritual purification, by bad conduct, and because of injury to people who, since they have died in a state of righteous indignation, will 'come back' to haunt the family which did them wrong.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

612 The most characteristic features of the Bemba social structure
611 are its hierarchical and authoritarian type of government, of which
591 the apex is a paramount chief believed to have supernatural powers; and its system of matrilineal descent with uxorilocal marriage.

643 The political structure of the Bemba is a centralized one. Its unity under a single head, the *Citimukulu*, was achieved, in 1931 at any rate, because of a belief in the spiritual powers the king was

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The Ceremony

881 There followed a series of solo dances done by the old women.
535 The rhythm of the drums was definitely of the chisunga type, but some of the songs did not seem to be connected with the ceremony. The tone of the company was serious throughout. The two girls themselves hardly ever ventured to peep out from under their blanket coverings. When they did, they looked frightened and shy.

The enclosure of the girls (*ukusakila banacisungu*)

881 After about an hour spent in this way, the company rushed out with a good deal of laughter and talking to a small *mufungo* tree that stood on the village garden mounds. The two girls trailed behind, still covered by blankets, pushed and shoved along by the younger helpers. There were no men present and young children were warned off by excited screams. Nangoshye sat down by the *mufungo* tree and began pulling out leaves with her mouth. Then she made the girls crouch against the stem of the tree while the women built a sort of windscreen of branches round them. This was described as 'hiding the girls'.

('They are hiding them from the young girls and children.')[1]

Making fish-traps for the girls (*ukuteela banacisungu*)

Quite suddenly, Nangoshye shouted new directions. With screams of merriment, each women began to snatch at a *mufungo* bush for leaves. These pear-shaped leaves they folded into cones to resemble the small conical fish traps used by the Bemba. They sang a song about setting fish traps (No. 2) and ran round laughing as they pretended to catch each others' fingers in the leaf traps.

[83] ('It is a parable.' (*Ni milumbe*) 'The fish has many children and so will the girl.' 'It represents the organ of the man.')[2]

The girls' first jump (*ukuciluka banacisungu*)

More shouted orders from Nangoshye and the piled-up branches were snatched away from round the girls as they cowered at the foot of the tree. The boughs were stacked on their backs and

[1] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* All informants agreed that the girls were to be hidden from the community by this act.

[2] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation* (A.C.). The mother says she has given the girl all the teaching she can. She hands her over to the *nacimbusa* now.

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The Ceremony

881 531 I have no full comments recorded on these designs. The young women present were too junior to reveal the secret of the names on their own responsibility and I omitted to get a comprehensive interpretation from those in charge. One *nacimbusa*, when pressed, took me out to the bush, completely out of hearing of the village. She looked round nervously and said: 'People call whitewash "*pemba*" but we women call the design "*lota*".' It was an old word, she said, from very long ago. Throughout the ceremony, the whitewash represents the washing away of the menstrual blood. It was sent to chiefs in the old days to announce the end of the chisungu ceremony of an important Bemba princess. The bean design [831] evidently had a sexual significance. Nangoshye said it was a parable (*mulumbe*) of manhood. The eye design was described as of teaching the girl submission. When her husband insults her and scolds her, she is to sit silent and merely raise her eyes at him. He will be ashamed and say, 'Indeed, you have done well,' (*mwawamya*). The wild guinea-fowl design has also apparently a sexual meaning [831]. It was to teach the girl to hold on hard. The *cimbulumbulu* was another name for a great *nacimbusa* of the past, referred to in song (No. 41) as Cibale. The owl is a name used for a stupid person who suddenly becomes clever. The girl is taught at initiation so that she becomes clever or educated. The fool has presumably the same interpretation as the model with that name described below on page 88. Another woman described it as a design to teach concealment. The girl should hide everything in her heart, all the things taught her.

I believe that these designs and their names can be reckoned as the most esoteric part of the chisungu. I think that the meanings I give are very superficial ones. I regret I did not give more time to discussing them with the *nacimbusa*.

881 In the evening began the first rite of handing over the designs to the girls. Each of them was pulled into the hut by Nangoshye and stood up against the wall under her own wall design. The drums began and the company started singing 'Take the girl to the crocodile' (No. 22).[1] Women shouted at her, 'Look what you have been given! Look at the lovely clothes your mother's brother

[1] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* (A.C.). The crocodile represents wisdom and loyalty to the tribe. If a girl does not go through the ceremony she will not be loyal.

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881 has given you.' The ceremonial from this moment begins to represent the handing over or giving of secrets to the girl, and it emphasizes her kinsmen's and husband's obligations to help her.

NINTH DAY

Modelling the large pottery emblems

881 532 The next morning's work began at about eleven o'clock. Great piles of clay had been collected outside the hut and Nangoshye and a few helpers set to work to model what looked like an enormous snake coiled to cover the whole of the hut floor. When it was finished, legs were added round the outer coil. The whole was decorated with white, red and black earth and stuck all over with marrow, castor-oil and bean seeds set carefully about two inches apart. The work was very heavy. The group of women slapped and smoothed the clay with the utmost concentration until about five in the evening, none of them pausing for a regular meal. The task seemed to me endless. As the evening wore on, I suggested sticking the marrow seeds further apart to get the work done quicker. The idea was evidently a shocking one. Nangoshye was indignant. 'Ala! Mother! We couldn't do a thing like that. We must do everything with elegance (*busaka*). We must do it as we always do it.' Here was evidently a part of the ceremony that could not be skimped.

The interpretations of this emblem were curious. The women were reluctant to talk about it. Nangoshye first called it rays of the sun (*amashindo eya itengo*) and said it was to teach the girl that the sun was high and she must get on with her work. Later, ● [831] she admitted it was also a snake. It was manhood (*bwaume*).

The brother and sister

881 532 593 Meanwhile, some of the younger women had been modelling two small figures of a naked man and woman standing flat against the wall about two feet high. The man's arms were flung out wide, one hand on the shoulder of the woman who had her other hand folded across her face. The figures were described as 'the brother and sister'. They were the subject of eager delight throughout the day. Visitors kept pointing them out to me with evident pleasure. 'Look, the girl is crying because her father has died, but now the

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so that there will be a lot of visitors and everyone will say the chisungu is a very good one indeed.'

The rest of the company had already returned exhausted to their homes.

TENTH DAY

The guinea-fowl

The next day was spent in the same laborious fashion. A stellate design covering the whole floor was modelled and covered with colour and seeds. It was described as the guinea-fowl design (*amakanga*) and appeared to be associated with agricultural fertility as in the case of the guinea-fowl dance described on page 71.

('It is to remind the girl not to forget her hoe, and that she is to go on giving the people food', said one of my best informants. The guinea-fowl is also a sexual symbol. (See page 81.))

Again the elaborate models were cleared away at night. Desultory drumming and dancing went on until late.

ELEVENTH DAY

The festive porridge eating (*bwali bwa ukusangala*)

I was called in the middle of the morning to see an enormous cooking-pot full of water being set on the fire in the hut of the mother of one of the girls. Ordinary porridge was to be made, but the cooking itself was a ritual act. The flour was first stirred in by Nangoshye, who then handed over the spoon to one of the girl's maternal relatives. When the meal was cooked the girl's maternal grandmother was called to dish up the porridge and to hide *mbusa* in it. She filled a great enamel basin with porridge served in the usual way, and then stuck on top of it a small rounded lump of the cooked meal filled with the domestic *mbusa* (tobacco, salt, beads, meat, red dye and a small lump of whitewash). The whole was then decorated with marrow seeds and red dye and carried to the chisungu hut. Here a similar bowl had been prepared by the mother of the second girl and it stood waiting with the accompanying relish beside it.

It was a day of offering and receiving offerings—from the girls' mothers to the *banacimbusa*; from the younger *nacimbusa* to the

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was applauded. The other girl was throughout more stocky and reserved. A woman said to me: 'Well, we can't give her up! We must go on and on trying to teach her.'

TWELFTH DAY

This was a blank day. Nangoshye declared herself insulted and went off to reap her own fields. She had plenty to eat, as was clear to anyone sitting in a tent near her hut; but the relatives did not bring her enough 'dishes of respect'. 'They neglect me,' she went off grumbling.[1]

In the evening the pottery emblems were piled with branches, scattered with leaves of the magic *mufungu* tree, and fired.

THIRTEENTH DAY

This was another quiet day. In the morning, Nangoshye and her helpers went to inspect the pile of pottery emblems still covered with smouldering ashes.

The snake

In the afternoon a new pottery figure was made in the hut. It was an immense snake (*yongolo*). The clay was smoothed into coils that circled round the floor of the hut with a tail on the fire-stands against one wall and a head rearing up the opposite wall. Again the work was heavy and lasted two or three hours. There was the puddling of the clay outside the hut, the fetching of gourd and bean seeds and the meticulous arrangement of seeds along every coil of the snake's body. There was the same concentrated air about the women and the sense of a fight against time, but the same unwillingness to shorten the work at all.

(The women were reluctant to speak of the meaning of this emblem. 'It's just a snake' several said impatiently. Another added, 'It is to teach her not to deceive her husband.' On question, Nangoshye looked down with great embarrassment and said, 'Yes, it is a sign of manhood.'[2]

[1] "*Bansula*". *Ukusula* is to despise, neglect, or fail to acknowledge a person's rights.

[2] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* P. B. M. commented afterwards that it was not an ordinary snake. It was a *yongolo*, a very rare snake. It was to teach the girl that unexpected things might happen. She must support them all patiently.

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amused and interested, and the rings of beer foam round everyone's mouth were thought excruciatingly funny.

Finally, there was another rite of 'honouring the *mbusa*'. Nangoshye picked up the pottery emblems and hung beads on them. She offered them ceremonially to the elders in order, singing as a solo this time the precedence song, 'The arm-pit is not higher than the shoulder.'

The women shouted in congratulation to her. They used one of the old praise songs of the chief:

Mpuba mususmba!
Kwewa! Kwewa!

and greeted her with the nick-name that had been given her during the chisungu, '*Washishye*' 'You have been refused food'—a reference to the stinginess of the girls' mothers during the ceremony.

The symbolism of this rite is still obscure to me. The making and distribution of beer is one of the married women's most important duties and it is natural that this aspect of the girls' future work should be mimed in the ceremony. Women told me that the rite was to teach the bride to hide a gourd of beer in her hut and to produce it for her husband when the guest had gone. Another added that it was to teach the girls to submit themselves to their husbands (*ukwasikila*), the latter perhaps in conjunction with the honouring of the pliant *musenge* tree. The association of beer-making with gardens is obvious in the day-to-day speech of the Bemba and the offering of the pottery emblems known as the 'garden mound' could be interpreted as making the bride free to cultivate her own garden and hence to brew the resultant beer. The garden-mound also symbolises the woman owned and 'cultivated' by her husband (No. 44).

The preparation of the jumping hoop (mupeto)

The two girls were then sent off with some of the younger helpers to fetch a piece of the *mulombwa*, or male tree. They came back carrying a branch on their shoulders and they were left to kneel with it thus with down-cast eyes in the humble attitude (see frontispiece) whilst the elder women offered the different *mbusa* to it ritually.

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881 fire-stands. The girl stood on the model and pretended to put a pot
532 on the fire.

The pipe (Song 59). This was a rough imitation of a white man's pipe. It was used to teach the girl not to idle, smoking, all day.

B. AGRICULTURAL DUTIES

The garden mound (Song 44, Fig. 7). This model represents one of the women's gardening mounds. The song refers to industry in gardening and also, by a double meaning, to the husband's rights
[831] over his wife—the woman is a cultivated garden through which another man must not pass without trespassing.

The garden (Song 45, Fig. 8). This model, a helmet-like bowl, was handed to and fro by the actors during a song which urged the girl to put her energies into gardening and to take care to preserve the seeds so that she did not use up all the food in time of famine. This *mbusa* was also used in one of the woodland rites (see p. 95).

The hoe (Song 47, Fig. 10). Nangoshye took an imitation hoe, about 8 inches long, and pretended to hoe the ground and this the two girls did in turn after her, the other women miming the gesture of hoeing with their arms. The accompanying song urges the girl
[831] to cultivate her garden and, by a double meaning, likens the husband to a hoe which will open up the girl, who is thus compared to the garden.

C. OBLIGATIONS OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

The bracelet (Song 38, Fig. 1). This is a large clay bracelet, daubed with whitewash, which was put on each of the girls' arms in turn. It represents the *naalama* or initial instalment of the marriage payment and it stresses the husband's duty to provide clothes and other things for his wife.

The bead necklet (Song 39, Fig. 2). In some ceremonies this is a mushroom-shaped object representing the conus shell from which the triangular beads (*mpande*) worn by Bemba women are cut; in the ceremony that I witnessed the model was of the triangular bead itself, threaded with string and hung round the girl's neck or swung in one of the actors' hands. The song stated that 'My mpande bead has fallen in the chief's court' and referred to the

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teristic features of a particular social structure than in universal human attitudes. One characteristic feature of this sort is a system of reckoning descent through the matrilineal rather than the patrilineal line, which may give rise to conflict between the mother's brother and the father; or an emphasis on primogeniture, strong enough to provoke unconscious resentment in the younger sons of a family. Bateson and Gluckman have suggested that conflicts of this sort find in ritual an expression which they cannot secure in daily life.

Anthropologists tend to use such explanations in the case of ritual which cannot easily be interpreted in any other way, either because it is at variance with some other part of the same ceremony, or because it seems to fit poorly with the idiom of the tribe in question. 'Why do Zulu women dress up as men in a rite designed to produce rain?' asked Gluckman in a recent broadcast. Because (he announces) Zulu women react against the lowly status they have as wives in the kraals of their husband's relatives. They find compensation in ritual by aping the behaviour of men. In a 'rite of reversal' in which they assume men's clothes, herd cattle like men, and carry men's arms, they throw off their subjection and acquire the necessary feeling of confidence that they will be able to produce rain for the tribe.[1]

There are many incongruities in the chisungu. I have been quite unable to interpret some of them. There is a contradiction, to European ways of thinking, between the concentration of fears around the beginning of married life and the open pleasure in sex relations which Bemba express. Puberty is eagerly looked forward to by the girls. They and their parents watch the growth of their breasts with interest and excitement and openly discuss the approach of womanhood. Girls are enthusiastic about the prospect of marriage and are taught that sex relations are pleasant and that it is their duty to give pleasure to their husbands. They do not seem to fear the first act of intercourse or to apprehend that it will be painful. It will be recalled that a young bride reaches this stage very gradually since she is given to her husband many

[1] I have probably gone further than Gluckman intended in this sentence, and I have also made his treatment of ritual sound much more crude than it actually is by selecting only one aspect of his interpretations for mention.

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months before puberty and forms of partial intercourse are practised before she is fully grown. Yet, in spite of this, intercourse is thought to be dangerous. Moreover, it is the act within the marriage bond that is feared, not the act outside it. 833

The taboos surrounding marriage may be accounted for superficially in terms of Bemba belief, as I have already tried to show. 784 769 Since it is through marriage that a man is able to get into touch with his ancestral spirits, the relationship is, for that reason, considered dangerous; dangerous because it is a source of power. Taboos of the Bemba type may exist in other tribes where access to ancestral spirits can only be made after an act of intercourse in legal wedlock followed by purification. Data on this point are not available from other areas at present.

It is difficult to believe that the Bemba associate guilt with sex in marriage, even though they speak of married couples as being hot, or with 'bad things on their bodies', if they have not been purified in the approved way. It is at least possible that sex is only considered shameful in association with a man's ancestors who are, in this society, his maternal uncles and grandfather. In daily life a Bemba behaves with reticence and shyness before his mother's brother since he may one day inherit the latter's wife together with his name, his status and his bow.[1] There may thus be an extension to the spirit world of attitudes to living relatives, which would explain the resolute attempt to keep a 'hot' person away from the spirit shrines. 831 606 603

The taboos may also reflect the anxieties associated with marriage in Bemba society, for it is, after all, a frail link on which to depend for an approach to supernatural power. Margaret Read has pointed out that among the Nyasaland Ngoni, who are patrilineal with strong patrilineages, and who practise marriage by bride-wealth, girls are protected before marriage and the ceremony involves a test of virginity. After marriage there are few, if any, taboos on handling fire. Among the neighbouring Cewa who are, 581 171

[1] It is possible that the castration complex takes a different form in matrilineal societies in which a young man succeeds to the role of his maternal uncle and not his father. The reluctance to associate sex with an approach to the ancestors may be connected with it. Malinowski made suggestions along these lines in 1927 in *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* but little serious comparative work has been done on these lines since then, so far as I know.

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mbusa. It is also a passage concealed from the outside world as the girls are concealed from the eyes of the rest of the community under the blankets. Monkeys are represented throughout the chisungu as being enterprising in thefts, usually for the sake of the family.

The immediate interpretation given was that the song meant the hiding of the girls from the village; and that the crawling was meant to make them look ridiculous. I. A. Nkonde gives:

'How shall we go into the ceremony? Shall we enter like monkeys that crawl in in stealth? Thus we show we are forsaking the normal way of life. But we have to go through dark and difficult places before we get wisdom.'

Kasonde says:

'How shall we enter in? We shall enter exposing our buttocks like monkeys.

We are free in the house.

There is nothing secret to us.'

No. 2. Setting the Fish Traps. Sung while making imitation fish traps out of leaves (p. 65):

Ubwamba bwali bwandi!	Here is my fishing weir!
Ndetabataba no moso.	I am bustling about to set a fish trap in it.

Interpretation. Ubwamba is a fishing dyke built in mud across a backwater. The *moso* is the conical fish trap set in it. *Bwamba* also means nakedness and hence is used as an euphemism for the sex organs. The leaf cups with which the women pretend to catch each others' fingers apparently represent the fish-traps and also the vagina of the woman. Fish appear as symbols of fertility throughout the ceremony and the women mention this in immediate explanation of the relation to the words of the song, i.e. 'The mother says, "The girl was my responsibility, but I cannot teach her everything. I have tried to do so up to now but I have failed and therefore now I have to entrust her to the *nacimbusa* to carry out the ceremony for her. If she refuses it means there is no hope for my girl".'

No. 3. The Chisungu falls off. Sung after the girls have made their first jump over a faggot bundle and are carried back to the village (p. 66):

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Songs Sung During the Ceremony

Interpretation. *Mpolo* is wild grass. The pig gets up early to look for food and the girl is to do the same after she is married. Pigs root up food in rough ground and hence the girl must be prepared to work hard to get food for the family. Nkonde's version is 'Young girls, seek wisdom now you have entered into womanhood. The provision of food is now in your hands and you have to feed those about you and bring up the children in the manner we have taught you'.

No. 8. The guinea-fowl. Also sung at the root of the *mutuku* tree to the action of churning up the ground:

We makanga,	You guinea-fowl,
So lindo!	Come here and wait!

Interpretation. The guinea-fowl scratchs the soil to find food, as the pig does. There is a similar emphasis on the need for looking for things instead of expecting them to lie on the surface. The guinea-fowl is also a sex symbol and appears in one of the wall-designs and as a large pottery emblem in the hut. Women said the song was to teach the girl industry. Nkonde writes: 'You are like a guinea-fowl. You have to look for things yourself. The whole world is in your hand. It is your duty to make the best of it.'

No. 9. The little garden. Also sung at the root of the *mutuku* tree to the action of sowing seeds and scraping them up with the hands (p. 71):

Akabala,	The little garden,
Balala.	The garden of the ground-nuts.

Interpretation. This is a typical example of meaning by inference rather than in the actual word content. Women explained 'When the rain falls you hoe ground-nuts'; or 'It is to teach the girls how to garden'. Nkonde writes: 'You do not use the word garden for land that has not been dug. You cannot expect to get ground-nuts, or anything else, where you have never worked. The blood comes from a cut which means that nothing on this earth can be got without labour.'

No. 10. The tortoise starts to climb. A song sung while the girls are made to climb legs foremost up the *mutuku* tree (p. 71):

754 of magical forces in sorcery. The *mfiosbi* is a man who kills without rhyme or reason, an enemy of society who kills from a distance, who is associated with black birds and who steals parts of the body from newly dug graves.(1) Enemies may also be killed by the use of medicine, either apparently by an evilly disposed person or by the *Ng'anga* who may be employed to defend someone who believes he is attacked.(2)

831 372 *Sex and Fire.* Characteristic of this group of peoples is the series of beliefs associated with the magic potency of sex when used according to certain rules, and, connected with this, the danger of the pollution of domestic fires or the fires of chiefs by contact with adulterers or evil livers. Such beliefs are the basis of the multiplication of small protective rites associated with chieftainship, the bringing-up of children, and the girls' initiation ceremony.(3)

SOME IMPORTANT RITUALS

788 The most important ceremonies carried out amongst the Bemba are as follows:-

241 (1) *Economic Rites.* At the time of the firing of the bush the chief or headman places an axe at the head of his bed at night or, in the case of a chief, in the relic shrine. Sowing ceremonies at the Paramount's capital used to be elaborate, but are now reduced to the placing of seeds in the relic shrines; similar ceremonies are done by headmen. The first-fruits rites, when the tasting of the new crops takes place, were also formerly elaborate among the Bemba. They are still carried out in an abbreviated form at the capital, and headmen place in their small spirit huts portions of each new crop.

766 782 (2) *Ceremonial in Chieftainship.* The most elaborate forms of ceremonial amongst the Bemba are those that surround the burial of a dead chief, the installation of his successor and the moving of his village. In the old days the death of a Paramount Chief was concealed for a few days while his followers fled from the capital and the sacred relics were moved to a place of safety. The ritual buriers then took charge and dried the body and covered it with a sauce made of beans, carefully preserving the toe and finger nails. After a year the corpse was carried round the Paramount's territory and human victims were sacrificed on each spot where the body rested at night. The body was then carried across the Chambesi river where it was received by the *shimwalule* who carried it into the sacred grove. The favourite wives of the chief and some of his slaves were put into the grave to hold the body of the *Citimukulu* and were stifled as the earth was filled in. Although cattle are not kept in the area, the body was wrapped in the skin of an ox.

643 The installation of a chief is a similarly complex process, in which all the *bakabilo* and *bafingo* play their part. Important elements were the transfer of the sacred relics to the new capital, the lighting of the chief's new fire, and the installation of his head wife. Details of this form of ceremonial are not available from the associated tribes, but it is certain that

(1) For some comments on the relation between witchcraft and psychopathology, see Davidson, 1949.
(2) Richards, 2, 1935. (3) Richards, 7, 1940.